

## Kask, Bobbie

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**From:** Howley, Eileen <ehowley@learn.k12.ct.us>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 21, 2013 2:17 PM  
**To:** AppropriationTestimony  
**Subject:** Testimony: Interdistrict Grants Proposed Budget reduction

Good Afternoon,

My name is Eileen Howley, Executive Director of LEARN, the Regional Educational Service Center serving 21 school districts in south eastern Connecticut. I am hoping that you will be able to assist us in rectifying a funding issue for southeastern Connecticut. In the Governor's proposed budget, all funding has been eliminated for non-Sheff region interdistrict grant programs. The budget maintains funding for the Sheff region. This will result in the loss of dozens of high quality interdistrict programs for our students in southeastern Connecticut. As you may know, the Interdistrict Grant program has been very successful in southeastern Connecticut in reducing racial and economic isolation among and between students in our public schools. The program has allowed us to serve hundreds of students in grades 2-12 for well over a decade. We were awarded **32** grants during the past grant cycle. More often than not these grants are the only opportunity many students from across the region have to interact with peers from diverse cultures and economic backgrounds. The grants are grounded in rigorous academic standards and provide unique opportunities for face-to-face learning across communities, contexts, and cultures. Many of the very same racial and socio-economic factors that led to the Sheff suit impact students in southeastern CT, just as dramatically as their Hartford peers.

Students in southeastern Connecticut deserve to have the same opportunities as the students in the greater Hartford area. I hope that you will help us to ensure that when budget decisions are made, funding will be restored to support student programs outside of the Sheff region. Any assistance you can provide in restoring the Interdistrict Grant funding for non-Sheff districts would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your time and consideration for the students and school districts in southeastern Connecticut.

Eileen S. Howley, Ed.D.  
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